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Robert P. T. Coffin's

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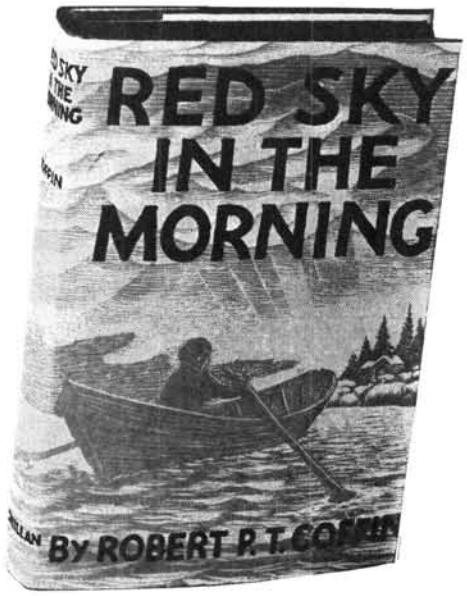

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Mark Twain: Anti-Victorian

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THERE has been a good deal of nonsense written about Mark Twain, as will always be the case when a great writer (and he was certainly that) becomes a symbol for an age, or a country, or a state of mind. Some of his commentators (notably Van Wyck Brooks) have used him as a big stick with which to beat the genteel school of American writing, which was too near death to fight back. Mark, they said, was suppressed by his genteel (and deeply loved) wife; and by Howells, who shivered with apprehension lest he should say in a book (as he does in these just published notebooks) that using his blankety-blank hotel coffee set was like pouring milk from a womb. Others have made him into the eternal pioneer, oppressed, disgusted, and disillusioned by the effete East, and effeter Europe.

Two books,* published to celebrate his centenary, may clear the air with their abundance of common sense and facts. Professor Wagenknecht's critical biography, for example, if it contributes nothing really new, is a sane and accurate discussion of a man hard to analyze, and very difficult to estimate without exaggeration either of his tragic pessimism or his boisterous humor. This writer's sensible handling of the wife-suppression theory is excellent, and indeed his volume is the most useful, if not the most brilliant or penetrating, short book on Mark Twain.

For new material one must go to the "Notebook," the casual records set down from the Mississippi days to the end, used by Twain himself in many a book, and ransacked by Mr. Paine for his biography, but now for the first time published intact. The world, says Mr. Paine, has grown tolerant; what might have given offense in 1912 can now be freely printed. He might have added that the world has grown intolerant of biography that does not let us see all the evidence.

MRS. CLEMENS AND THE CHILDREN

From left: Susy, Clara, Mrs. Clemens, and Jean. Photograph taken in Hartford, 1884, and reproduced from Albert Bigelow Paine's biography of Mark Twain.

It is not very startling evidence, nor does it do more than confirm what might have been guessed before from Twain's published books. The novelty is in a change in emphasis. The book is an uneven and discontinuous narrative which records, sometimes racily, sometimes by the merest notes, his adventures, from the cholera ship that brought him from San Francisco to New York in 1866, to the lecture cruise around the world, undertaken in 1895 in order to pay his debts; and on to the last crushing years when he lost his daughter Susy and his wife. His experiences are much more elaborately discussed in the books he based upon his travels, but the record is more intimate and more revealing here.

What distinguishes these journals, however, is not the narrative but the confessions. Occasionally in the earlier years, increasingly as he grows older, predominantly in his old age, the notebooks record Mark Twain's intimate thoughts about the world and man and himself, often compressed into aphorisms, nearly always put into literary form, ready to be used, as indeed they often were. And these confessions and protests are as consistent in their general philosophy as they are inconsistent in mood and prejudice. Kings are up in one chapter and down in the next; monarchism stays where he put it when he was a democrat on the Mississippi. God is sometimes reviled and sometimes pitied, but Twain's idea of man in relation to the universe changes little once he has made up his mind, which was apparently about the time that his misfortunes as a credulous investor began. Yet he was always suspicious of Providence.

Twain's next biographer will squeeze what general criticism can be had from these notes. One conclusion will, I think, be forced upon him. Mark Twain was never suppressed. He said what he wanted most to say. But oppressed he certainly was. These journals prove that from the time he matured to his death, and with increasing clarity of insight as he grew older, he was the bitter and determined foe of the Christian optimism of the nineteenth century which was the sentiment of the great majority in his time. He was the first, and, at least in his journals, the most outspoken, save only Samuel Butler, of the anti-Victorians.

> Idiots argue that Nature is kind and fair to us, if we are loyal and obey her laws, and we are responsible for our pains and diseases because we violate the laws—and that all this is judged. Good God! Cholera comes out of Asia and cuts me down when I have taken every pains to have myself and house in good sanitary conditions. Oh, in that case, my *neighbors* violated Nature's law—and Nature makes *me* responsible, takes it out of me—and that is called just! Very well, the caterpillar doesn't know what the laws are—how then are these people going to excuse nature for

Next Week

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON
By LOUIS LEDOUX

HANDS
By CHARLES G. NORRIS
Reviewed by Max Miller

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* *MARK TWAIN'S NOTEBOOK. Prepared for Publication by Albert Bigelow Paine. New York: Harper & Bros.* 1935. $4.

MARK TWAIN. The Man and His Work. By Edward Wagenknecht. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1935. $3.

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afflicting that helpless and ignorant creature? It would save those people a world of uncomfortable shuffling if they would recognize one plain fact—a fact which a man willing to see cannot be blind to, namely, that there is nothing kindly, nothing beneficent, nothing friendly in Nature toward any creature, except by capricious fits and starts; and that Nature's attitude toward all life is profoundly vicious, treacherous, and malignant. This caterpillar two inches long and the thickness of a cedar pencil—when getting ready to turn into a great nice moth—partially buries his body in a little trench—and Nature has *got him*, the spores of a peculiar fungus are blown about by the wind, they lodge in a wrinkle of his neck and begin to sprout and grow; the roots force their way into the worm and along through the body, and the worm slowly dies and turns to wood, preserving all its details, like a petrifaction.

Why not, then, outspoken in his books? The answer is that he was outspoken in his books if you care to read them philosophically. He did not write them philosophically, with the exception of the posthumous "Mysterious Stranger."

"It is the strangest thing," he says in 1895, "that the world is not full of books that scoff at the pitiful world, and the useless universe and violent, contemptible human race—books that laugh at the whole paltry scheme and deride it. Curious, for millions of men die every year with these feelings in their hearts. Why don't I write such a book? Because I have a family. There is no other reason. Was this those other people's reason?"

This remark is characteristic of Mark Twain, and its opinion of God, man, and the universe is repeated hundreds of times in the notebooks. God, in his specifications for a good God, would do well to spend his time learning how to make men happy, and studying astronomy. Man, a selfish, cruel creature, was so stupid that when he invented heaven he left out of it—"in a thousand years you would never guess!"—the thing he enjoyed most on earth, sexual intercourse, and substituted *prayer*. No animal was wild until man made him so, man who is first cousin to the louse. No one sixty-five years old (he said it of fifty also) if comfortably dead would wish to live again. God is Might (and He is shifty, malicious, and uncertain). And, as far back as 1885—We are animalculæ that infest and pollute the globes which are blood corpuscles in the arteries of God. "And God does not know we are there and would not care if he did."

The last part of the quotation, "Why don't I write such a book? Because I have a family," is equally characteristic of Mark Twain, who had as great self-knowledge and as little self-criticism as have most geniuses. He was always writing such books. His radical ideas are implicit, and sometimes explicit, in "Huckleberry Finn," and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." In every piece of writing he did except pure burlesque and pure description, they constitute, to use his own words, that "gravity which is the foundation, and of real value." This, as he said in a striking letter about Theodore Roosevelt (included in this volume), was beneath all his success as a humorist. But he did not attack God and man and expose his whole philosophy in his best books for a reason more commanding than the need to support his family. In these books he did not really want to write about philosophy. They are books about individuals and the life of individuals. They are not philosophies, they are stories. And about persons he felt precisely as Dean Swift felt about men, whom he loved though he despised and hated mankind. The attempt to make Mark Twain into a philosopher is vain. Not one of his arguments about God, and goodness, and misery, and injustice, but has been made a thousand times in the history of ethics. His wording is vigorous, his reflections are sincere, but there is no originality in his ideas except as coming from his own experience. His mind ran this way when he reasoned; but when his imagination got to work, it usually took the other side. It brooded upon the folly of man, but it was a kindly brooding because Mark loved Huck and Tom and Colonel Sellers and Pudd'nhead Wilson and Joan and Arthur, and all the rest. He held their brief against God, against the universe, and against their fellow men. The more he got to know about people, the better he understood rascals and deadbeats, and the more he admired the plucky and the humorous and pitied the unfortunate. A universe that could produce such a child as his Susy was not bankrupt. It was a vicious universe, and nature was malignant, but there was Susy and there was Huck, both miracles if you please, but real. And of such he made his books, because the books he liked to write deal with persons, not theories. Theories are only useful, as in "King Arthur," to set them going. He believed in the theories, of course, but what he wrote about was his absorbing interest in the animalculæ who were so much more real than the unfriendly God. "My books are water"; he wrote in 1885, "those of the great geniuses are wine. Everybody drinks water." Now this was a really shrewd piece of literary criticism. He wrote of the water of everyday humanity because such books would support his family. But the reason they made money was because when he wrote of what he loved he wrote his best. (His worst also, but it is the best that counts.)

I must get back to the Mark Twain who could see nothing funny in Pickwick and who read "The Vicar of Wakefield" and Jane Austen with such painful endeavors to discover why they were liked. It was certainly the "gravity" (a weak term for such a fiery revolt) which lay beneath all that accounts for the vigor and bite of his humor. It accounts of course also for his indifference to accepted standards for others or for himself. He was a lecturer always, seeking broad effects, and I am sure that his contempt for the conventions of society was a factor in his wild exaggeration and his frequent bad taste. He had too little respect for life in general to be afraid of making it, and sometimes himself, ridiculous. Indeed Twain was a true satirist who loved real life too much to make it into an allegory or a thesis.

The convention he fought was not the taboo on "the facts of life," as has been rather stupidly supposed. Point out, if you can, the need of more "sex" in his books. Huck Finn may have been a sexual delinquent, but that has no relevance to

(*Continued on page* 14)

Farewell to the Mountain

By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

WE climbed that flank
Strewn with its long loose torrents of grey descending stone;
And the trees came up beside us, rank after rank,
As if they too wished to see the land as one;
The rivers straggling out of their banks and the fields falling
Under the gaze of a brown hawk circling the sky;
A heron flapping past; the late plows crawling
Over the red-washed clay under the cloud on high—

The mountain stood
Shoulders and muscles of granite in the light
Of the following day. And the clouds that for long had flowed
Clashing their drops on its rocks, rolled off to right.
In the morning there were the ripples of high wind going
Over the emerald texture of the trees;
And the thought of the rainy summer, this parting on us bestowing
Who had found sorrow and doubt, after so deep an ease.

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American Agent

THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW: The Story of a Checkered Life. By Marguerite Harrison. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1935. $3.50.

Reviewed by FRANK H. SIMONDS

A FEW weeks ago at Bread Loaf I was asked by a Wellesley professor if I did not think the opportunities for women in journalism were rapidly declining. Instantly there flashed across my mind a picture, surviving after a full generation, the picture of Lindsay Denison of the old *Sun* striding down Nassau Street and flinging back to me the explanation of his haste. "Can't stop, a fellow down town got fresh with our woman reporter and I have got to go down and beat him up."

Thirty years ago every New York newspaper did—if I may venture the "howler"—keep a woman reporter, but how they all hated her. Today by contrast, not only have women created places for themselves in the business, undreamed of in the old days, but they have frequently out-distanced the best men reporters in fields which once seemed closed to them. Thus beyond question Anne O'Hare M'Cormick is the best reporter of foreign events now on the job and Dorothy Thompson, the source to which one must turn for the interpretation of the inner meaning of German episodes.

Unmistakably Marguerite Harrison belongs with these two and her new book, "There's Always Tomorrow," which I think might be called with even greater accuracy "There's Always Tomorrow's Paper," is therefore not merely an amazingly and absorbingly interesting story in itself but one of the best contributions to understanding contemporary Europe that I have come across. The two great qualifications of the good reporter, the ability to get there before *it* happens and the art to describe how and why *it* did happen, Mrs. Harrison has to an unlimited degree.

Bachrach

MARGUERITE HARRISON

In the costume of a Turkish peasant.

Mrs. Harrison was one of Frank Kent's discoveries for the *Baltimore Sun*. He started her off on the society news and in due course promoted her to musical criticism. Having served her apprenticeship, she was then advanced to the rank of a reporter, the highest stage a journalist can reach. And then the war came along and swept her up in its stride. But it was only in the post-war years that Mrs. Harrison come into her own. Then, nominally a reporter, actually an agent for General Churchill and the Military Intelligence Division of the American Army, she ranged over Europe seeing clearly what now, after the lapse of a decade and a half, she remembers significantly.

Beginning her service as an American agent in Paris, Mrs. Harrison travelled first to Germany and saw the Reich in the first moments following defeat and during the bad days when the Treaty of Versailles was proclaimed. As a journalist Mrs. Harrison got everywhere and saw everybody. Rathenau opened his mind to her. Streseman came to her hotel to talk with her. She lived through the Sparticist Putsch, she saw the Republic arrive, and realized after Versailles that it was doomed. To the understanding of Hitlerian Germany, her picture of the first days of the republic is well nigh necessary.

From Berlin Mrs. Harrison travelled to Warsaw and saw another beginning. She met Paderewski as a prime minister and Marshal Pilsudski, the most inaccessible of all the great, talked to her at length. Then she slipped into Soviet Russia and began the adventure which was to lead to a prison cell and might easily have terminated before a firing squad. Presently the hegira continues, its route is marked by Constantinople. Mustapha Kemal appears in Angora and Emir Feisal in Bagdad. For three months she lives with the Bakhtiari Tribe in the wilds of Persia, where she is doctor as well as reporter. Incidentally, by this time Mrs. Harrison was making a film. The film ran for four months but the first sight of it broke the author's heart.

Mrs. Harrison has told her "story" so well that no seasoned reporter could dream of attempting to summarize any part of it. The student of international affairs, the specialist in Russian or German questions, the amateur in travel, all will find this book valuable beyond exaggeration. But the plain, simple soul, who hankers after a good story well told, will find this narrative not less satisfactory. Last of all the lover of the "spy" tale will here be rewarded beyond all reasonable expectation for Mrs. Harrison was an "American Agent" and her book loses little by comparison with that of the now famous "British Agent."

WALTER LIPPMANN

Recovery and Reform

THE NEW IMPERATIVE. By Walter Lippmann. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1935. $1.25.

Reviewed by R. GATEWOOD

THERE are few observers of history in the making who can lend plausibility to their interpretations without detriment to the elusive qualities of contemporary truth. Among those few, Mr. Lippmann has established a high standard for the lucid analysis of highly complex problems and his ability to give the impression of continuity to the manifold regulations that pour from Washington with torrential vigor. This monograph, a sketch of our changing order, reveals his persuasive logic at its best.

The situation which gives the book its title is rooted in the business crisis that began six years ago. An examination of three years under the guidance of Mr. Hoover and an equal number under Mr. Roosevelt reveals a unity of policy that appears to transcend party differences and strategic expedients. Mr. Lippmann's survey makes it amply clear that the "reforms" of the Democratic administration (represented by the convenient euphemisms of SEC, CCC, TVA, and SSC) are really more conventional than the steps to "recovery" initiated by the Republicans; and it is his hypothesis that measures of the latter character may well be the prototypes of a "permanent New Deal," involving a greater participation of state agencies in economic processes. The modern challenge, Mr. Lippmann holds, lies in the task of adapting the elements of individual freedom and initiative that have survived from the pioneer period to the exigencies of industrial society.

In thus defining the trend of national life, Mr. Lippmann has contributed to maintain that sense of tradition in public affairs which is the surest guarantee of disinterested service.

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Robust Romance

THE SEVEN ARMS. By L. A. G. Strong. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

L. A. G. Strong's latest novel treats material which has become familiar, almost conventional, in the literature of the Celtic renascence with a freshness and power which makes it seem completely new and completely his own. He writes of a peninsula in the western Highlands called, from the long sea lochs which indent it, the Seven Arms, where, amidst an isolated Gælic speaking people who have preserved almost unchanged the manners and traditions of their ancient past lived, at the beginning of the last century, a heroine who might have come straight out of the ancient epics of Gæl. Let that last phrase stand. Properly understood it will serve by itself to differentiate this novel from similar attempts to recreate a dying past. Jeanie Bán who followed her uncle to the Waterloo campaign because she was compelled to love and follow the strongest and returned to dominate all about her by her fierce, reckless spirit and the splendor of her legend is a romantic figure out of a romantic time but a figure too robust for sentimental tenderness, too vital to be the focus of nostalgic revery. There is little of the Celtic twilight about her story, much of the strong salt wind of the Atlantic, of the tonic harshness of sea and rock.

This is Mr. Strong at his best. He has been possessed by his material, and he has, in turn, completely possessed and mastered it. His clean, muscular prose has never been more perfectly controlled; it can flash out on occasion, as when the game-keeper Hugh looks at the waterfall, into a description as splendidly moving as any writing of our time and then stride at once to the ugly violence at the game-keeper's cottage without the slightest appearance of effort or the slightest break in the swift pace of the story. The astonishing variety of mood and incident, the range from the unaffected pathos of the dying Irish soldier and the gentle portrait of Jeanie's sister Ellen to the fierce tenseness of Jeanie's murder of her drunken husband and the wild comedy of her own funeral, the technical brilliance which can bring all this to vivid life without a single false or halting line, these things are most impressive only on reflection. An art perfectly controlled subordinates both manner and incident to the strongly felt unity of the story and lifts the whole as far above a mere exercise in stylistic brilliance as it is above the category of antiquarian *genre* painting.

Walter Scott would have envied the creator of Jeanie Bán. To have drawn Jeanie with sympathy and understanding but without sentimentality or exaggeration is a feat worthy of auctorial envy from the great. The minor characters, too, are vivid in their places and incident and setting are never scamped. Whether you like the Celtic renascence or not, this is a book you must read if you care about good writing.

L. A. G. STRONG

Manhattan Cheers

THUNDER OVER THE BRONX. By Arthur Kober. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

ARTHUR KOBER'S sketches of Bronx family life, when read at intervals in *The New Yorker,* are mainly funny. And Dorothy Parker, in her introduction to the collection, calls Mr. Kober "the Ring Lardner of the Grand Concourse." A more accurate designation, to my mind, would be to call him the Booth Tarkington of the Bronx. For when I read the book straight through, the humor, while there's plenty of it, no longer seemed the paramount quality. The Gross family in book form are not the caricatures they seemed as casuals of *The New Yorker;* they are as human as the Adamses of Indianapolis. And Bella Gross is amazingly like Alice Adams. Her attitude towards her parents, always afraid of what they're going to do next—"Oh, fa heaven's sakes, Pa"—and the way she gives her boy friend, Maxie Fine, the runaround whenever a better prospect heaves into sight—these are pure Tarkington, however much disguised by the customs and dialect of the second generation Yiddish-American.

As what Bella Gross, when she was trying to impress you, might call a dialectician, Arthur Kober is flawless and superb. His Gross family are no connections of Milt Gross; there's no exaggeration for effect, which makes the effect so much the better. Here's the language of the Eighth Avenue subway. That noise which sounds like thunder over the Bronx turns out to be Manhattan cheers from Mr. Kober's delighted readers.

SHOLEM ASCH

The Earlier Asch

MOTTKE THE THIEF. By Sholem Asch. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

LONG before the English-reading public learned the value of Sholem Asch, he had been loved and acclaimed by his own Jewish audience as their writer-laureate, master of the national lore, re-teller of the salty legends that pass from mouth to mouth in every household. In "Mottke the Thief" we become acquainted at last with that earlier Asch, not he who produced the symphonic proportions of "Three Cities" and the brooding, philosophic "Salvation," but that vigorous, humorous, sentimental spinner of lively tales. Here, perhaps, some will learn for the first time that Jewish literature provides other figures besides the too-familiar mournful Talmud student or the more modern victim of introspection. Mottke is a folk-figure that might have sprung from any peasant stock, a simple creature of the underworld, unhindered by complex or conscience. Abandoned to his own devices from the very start, he sprawls about through life, brawling, thieving, killing, procuring, feeling instead of thinking—an enormous, raffish caricature of Rousseau's natural man. Mottke is the pure, unabashed opportunist who, on a higher social level, might have been called "a soldier of fortune." Thrashing about in the undergrowth of poverty, he must become a criminal.

It is an old story—indeed the phrase "Mottke ganiff" (the thief) has passed into the language—but in Asch's hands it receives its final and enduring expression. The atmosphere of that little Russian village with its miserable Jewish quarter, its old damp cellars and cobbled streets, its Rabbis, shrews, cobblers, constables and thieves, is reproduced in the most vital and evocative coloring that writing can afford.

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The First Chief Justice

JOHN JAY: Defender of Liberty. By Frank Monaghan. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1935. $4.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

WITH the career of a man who, to quote the remainder of Mr. Monaghan's title-page, was a "Defender of Liberty against Kings and Peoples, Author of the Constitution and Governor of New York, President of the Continental Congress, Co-Author of the *Federalist,* Negotiator of the Peace of 1783 and the Jay Treaty of 1794," and "First Chief Justice of the United States," biography hitherto has very imperfectly coped. The first biography of Jay, by his son William Jay, not only had no literary merit, but by emphasizing the statesman rather than the man and suppressing "harmless and interesting details" pictured Jay as "having lived in an atmosphere which no mortal could long have breathed." A later brief biography by George Pellew took much the same attitude and made no thorough use of Jay's private papers. The four-volume collection of Jay's writings, edited by Henry P. Johnson, is also "a highly inadequate editing of a limited and poor selection of materials." Mr. Monaghan, who has had unrestricted access to various collections of Jay's papers, gives us for the first time an all-round view of Jay's career which, while it detracts nothing from Jay's reputation as a statesman, adds details which enable us to see him as a man.

Born in 1745 into a family of wealth and distinction in the society of provincial New York, educated at King's College, and early attaining a prominent position as a lawyer, Jay's attitude toward politics was that of an aristocrat with democratic sympathies. He disapproved the violent protests which aimed to defeat the repressive British acts of 1774, and in the first Continental Congress, of which he was one of the youngest members, sided with the moderates who hoped for united resistance without armed conflict. It was in that spirit that he wrote the "Address to the People of Great Britain," and he did not look for war when, pushed forward by events and joining with a majority in Congress "to avoid the appearance of dissension," he subscribed to the "Association" which declared a commercial boycott. He worked hard at the business of Congress, and as a member of the Provincial Congress of New York wrote the resolutions accepting the Declaration of Independence, but Mr. Monaghan notes that, like many of his colleagues, he did not regard the Declaration as "a complete and final separation" from Great Britain. He was still of the opinion, many years later, that "our country was prompted and impelled to independence by necessity and not by choice."

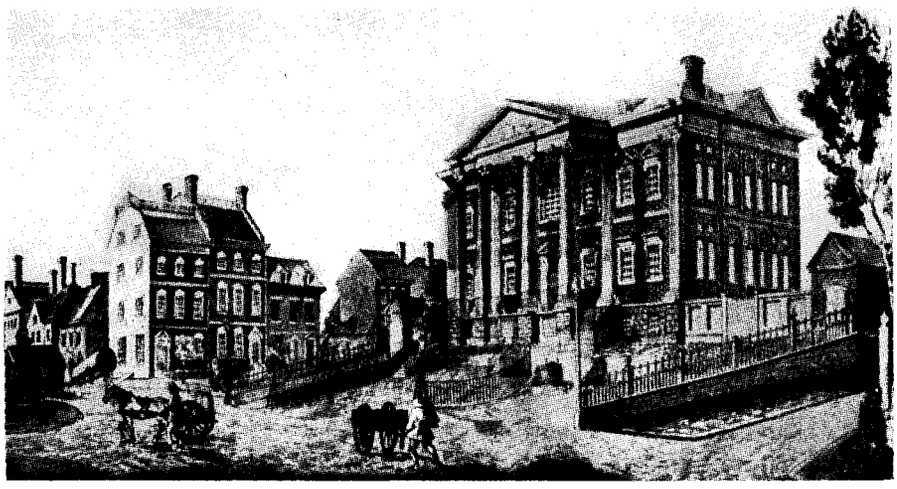
For the next twenty-five years Jay was almost continuously in public life. The first chief justice of the State of New York, he resigned that office at the end of 1778 to become a member and president of Congress, was in Europe from 1779 to 1784, first as Minister to Spain and then as one of the peace negotiators, was made Secretary of Foreign Affairs on his return, and in 1789 became the first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court. While holding that office he ran for governor of New York as a Federalist, but was defeated by Clinton. In 1794 he went to England to negotiate the commercial treaty which bears his name, and on his return, notwithstanding the violent opposition which the treaty stirred up, served two terms as governor of his native State before retiring, in 1801, to what were to be twenty-eight years of private life.

Mr. Monaghan's account of these various episodes, while always thorough and valuable, is not in all cases equally original, since with some of them the ground has already been pretty well worked. The Spanish mission, the peace negotiations, and the Jay treaty, for example, have been minutely studied, and Mr. Monaghan freely acknowledges his indebtedness at these points to others. He adds a good deal that is interesting, however, regarding Jay's first voyage to Spain, his tedious stay at Cadiz and his long and disheartening experiences at Madrid, his relations with Franklin, John Adams, and many others at Paris, and his social success in London in the winter of 1794-95 while awaiting, after the conclusion of the treaty, a favorable season for recrossing the Atlantic. The narrative of his service as chief justice of the United States, enlivened by descriptions of the discomforts incident to travelling the circuit, is a contribution of marked importance to American judicial history, particularly because historians, as a rule, have seen little significance or interest in the work of the court until John Marshall became its head.

The long period of retirement at Bedford was marred by illness, but Jay kept up his interest in politics, corresponded at length with Richard Peters and Sir John Sinclair about improvements in agriculture, and served for several years as president of the Westchester Agricultural Society, and lent his support to the cause of the manumission of slaves. The American Antiquarian Society and other learned bodies conferred honorary membership, and the American Bible Society made him its president in 1821. Writers showered him with copies of their books and pamphlets, but he himself wrote nothing of importance, and an offer to write the official life of Hamilton was declined "because he felt he had neither the time nor the talent." To the generation that saw the War of 1812 and the rise of a new democracy, however, he became hardly more than a name, and if any public notice was taken of his death, in 1829, Mr. Monaghan has not thought it important enough for mention.

Mr. Monaghan sees in Jay a man whose "profound religious faith" had the happy effect of making him "a mellow philosopher," humble, benign, indisposed to argument with "those who do not aim at truth and right," and excelling in good works. He was also, we are told, "frequently witty and sometimes ribald." His quoted remark to Robert Morris about Gouverneur Morris's loss of a leg will pass for ribaldry, but the examples of wit are not many. Mr. Monaghan's well-written biography, however, has the great merit of restoring a distinguished statesman and jurist to the status of an interesting human being, and the scholarly and sympathetic narrative which he offers leaves nothing of importance for any other biographer of Jay to do.

William MacDonald was formerly professor of history at Brown University, and for many years a member of the editorial staff of The Nation.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, JAY'S RESIDENCE AS GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK.
Milbourne's engraving of a drawing by W. J. Condit.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Department Store Paradise

IT IS the privilege of a literary editor to sample ideas in advance of publication, and often his interest refuses to wait for a release of the books he has read in order to discuss some of the thoughts they suggest.

One such sampling has been of Barbara Spofford Morgan's "Individuality in a Collective World," which has been published, but not yet reviewed in this magazine, and Sinclair Lewis's new novel, "It Can't Happen Here," soon to be issued.

Mrs. Morgan turns the idea of collectivism upside down and spanks it. Communism does not concern her, nor the collectivism of the Nazis and the Fascists. The collectivized Russians, Italians, Germans, at least have some philosophy, good or bad, behind their scramble to be alike. What troubles her is American collectivism which she sees as being in operation already, although, since it is often called prosperity, it is not recognized as an ism at all. Assisted by the advertisers, emphasized by the depression, caused, perhaps, by the long struggle of Americans to cash in on the resources of a continent, a collective mind has been shaping in the United States. It is a mind more interested in the instruments of living than in living itself. It is a mind trained to want what industrialism lives to provide for it—automobiles, radios, apartments with two bathrooms—and to go on and on wanting without realizing the sacrifice of real individualism involved in living a mass life and responding only to mass impulses. "Rugged individualism," she says, means only the right to continue this process, until every American is collectivized in a state whose purpose is to make goods, sell goods, use goods in standard patterns, for standard minds conditioned never to look beyond these instruments of living. This is as much the antithesis of true individualism as the very different submissions and negations of the Orient.

And here comes Sinclair Lewis with a novel whose thesis also is that such a collectivism already exists in an allegedly free America. There are millions of Americans whose individuality has been so weakened that they will swallow without a gullup the most fantastic promises, provided they are promises of the only things they have been taught to want—money, autos, plenty to eat, plenty to drink, plenty to wear. Their sales resistance has been lowered to almost zero, while in the same ratio, the skill and the means of propaganda have been lifted until any good ex-advertising man can put over a religion, or an economic theory, or a candidate for president. Individualism is dead, collectivism is what American business lives on, and what American politicians will soon use to make an American system that will cause Hitler to wipe his eyes, and the founding fathers of the Republic to petrify in their graves.

The argument leaves us convinced, pessimistic, yet with a residue of skepticism as to the results prophesied. Only the mentally blind can fail to see that the American public grows more and more suggestible each year. Only those who profit by it or who are its willing victims, are blind to the dangers of the powerful technique of advertising when used, as it is so generally used, to force the wants of the individual into the pattern of the perfect consumer who dramatizes consumption as success in living.

And yet there have never been very many real individuals in any culture. Men who do their own thinking, and seek out and gratify their real desires, are always rare, always will be rare. And even in a quantity civilization such as ours is rapidly becoming, they are still a source of power because they are the only ones who in any spiritual or philosophical sense are mentally still really alive. They write the good books and read the good books. They supply the ideas we grow on, when we grow, and they are in an inevitable opposition to the mass mind, an opposition which is not necessarily hopeless because it seems quantitatively so feeble. They are not aggressive, perhaps they do not have to be aggressive in order to succeed.

The danger is that violence, as in Germany, Italy, and Russia, will suppress them by insulating society against their influence. In that case individuality goes underground to emerge in some volcanic form years later. But the immediate danger in America seems to be different. Our worship of quantity and the instrument tends to starve and thus shut out individualism. The man who is a person and not just a reacting machine, finds fewer and fewer outlets for his individualism. If he writes, there are few to print, and few to read him, because quantity circulation has displaced quality circulation. If he speaks, he has little chance on the radio, which again is sold to quantity appeal. If he is executive, jobs are taken from him to be given to minds that can guarantee quantity production. He is suspect in a village, and lost in New York. Books are and always have been his salvation. In a book the individual has time and again stated his difference from massed mankind, and time and again such a book has become an influence, sometimes after many years. But even books in America come increasingly under the tyranny of quantity production. The book not suited for the mass reader may get published, but also may die whenever current methods of distribution are geared to quantity and leave quality in the lurch. One might say that it is only the perverse idealism or the essential individuality of the publishing profession that keeps the book trade from being utterly collectivized, like many newspapers and all but a few magazines. The ideal of quantity which rules the United States today is a barrier to individualism increasingly difficult to cross.

Those who propose to own America will come by the quantity road. They will play upon the feeble individualism characteristic of a collectivized state. They will use the collectivized newspapers and the collectivized magazines. They will probably not suppress the individualists' books, because they think that will be unnecessary. If they despise what seems to the quantity mind a feeble instrument they will be wrong. We devoutly hope that they will overlook such books. In them lies the best hope of true individualism.

We do not know who these are that propose to own America, nor presumably are they conscious of so definite a purpose. But certainly collectivism will soon bring them over the horizon. All one can say in answer to such obvious dangers is that there are signs that all the people are not yet fooled into believing they will be happy in a department store paradise.

Ten Years Ago

During the Fall of 1925, The Saturday Review recommended for its store of interesting personal minutiae "A Lifetime with Mark Twain: The Memories of Katy Leary, for Thirty Years His Faithful and Devoted Servant," written by Mary Lawton. The previous year had witnessed a genuinely important event—the publication of "Mark Twain's Autobiography." Carl Van Doren, who reviewed the book in the issue of October 25th, 1924 wrote: *"The autobiography makes no such explosion as 'The Mysterious Stranger' or the letters, but . . . it crackles constantly, and now and then it stuns."*

Today

"Mark Twain's Notebook" is published this week, in celebration of Mark Twain's centenary. In his review on page 3 of this issue, Henry Seidel Canby writes: *"What distinguishes these journals . . . is not the narrative but the confessions. . . . The notebooks record Mark Twain's intimate thoughts about the world and man and himself."*

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Letters to the Editor: *The American Language; Early Settlers in Oregon*

Usage, U. S. A.

SIR:—As one half-American by birth and a student for many years of both forms of our common language, I was keenly interested in Mr. Christopher Morley's sympathetic and understanding review of Mr. Horwill's "Dictionary of Modern American Usage," the typescript of which I was privileged to read. It is because he so clearly recognizes the difficulty of the subject that I venture to offer the following observations on his admirable review of Mr. Horwill's book.

Why does Mr. Morley claim the proverbial use of *pretty* as an "Americanism"? The earliest quotation in O.E.D. is dated 1565, it was used by Massinger, and has been in ordinary use here for over 300 years. Mr. Horwill accords only a single obelus to *shape* (in the sense of *condition*), and Mr. Morley accepts it as an American usage; but O.E.D. quotes it from the *Scotsman* in 1901, and it was certainly in use here as a colloquialism long before then. Both critics regard *all of* (in "all of the nations of the world") as bad English, and Mr. Morley refers to it as a "universal Americanism"; Mr. A. P. Herbert of *Punch*, who has recently discovered English, has been fulminating against its use. But, as a matter of fact, *is* it wrong, and is it American? With a pronoun (as in "and so say all of us") it was used by Shakespeare and Addison, and with a noun it is quoted in O.E.D. from 1800 (described as "comparatively modern" and "rare"). *Webster* declares the use of *all of* with a noun to be "recent," but does not claim it to be distinctively American. Mr. H. W. Fowler does not refer to it in "Modern English Usage," and, indeed, uses it with a noun in that book. The truth seems to be that the usage is common to both forms of the language; it may be ugly, as it is in the examples Mr. Horwill gives, but it may also be inevitable, as it is in James Montgomery's hymn:

'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

A few minor points may be briefly referred to. *Webster* gives the transitive sense of *knock up* ("fatigue till unable to do more") as the only distinctively British one, and does not include *enceinte* as a sense of *Knocked up* (during the War an American soldier referred to a British comrade as *nutty*, meaning to compliment him, a good example of this kind of misunderstanding). Mr. Morley quotes Mr. Horwill's inclusion of *trainsman* as a "slip": only *trainman*, the usual term, appears *s. v. TRAIN*. *Webster* gives *tab* in the singular only in *keep tab on*, though the plural is also common. I fear we must now share the shame of *in the neighborhood of* (described by Mr. Fowler as a "repulsive combination of Polysyllabic humor and Periphrasis"); it passes the subeditor over here all too often, and appeared in the (London) *Times* as far back as 1893. O.E.D. (Supp.) also misses *Babbittry** (the death of which within ten years, also of *Birrellism*, was prophesied by *Notes & Queries* when commenting on their inclusion in the C.O.D. *Addenda*).

In conclusion, may I ask Mr. Morley whether he considered the time-lag, inevitable in the production of great dictionaries, when he referred to the "delightful errors in American usage" to be found in the lexicons issued by the Oxford Press? American usage is hardly to be described as static, and the definitions he has in mind may well have been exact at the time they were drafted.

I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

H. G. LE MESURIER, LT. COL.

Exmouth, Devon, England.

* This word does not come within any of Mr. Horwill's nine catagories.

"YOU CAN MAKE YOUR HEROINES A LITTLE MORE DARING THIS YEAR. NOT YIELDING, YOU KNOW, BUT TOYING WITH THE IDEA."

Oregon Pioneers

SIR:—As an Oregonian, though neither a native nor a pioneer, I rejoice that our H. L. Davis has written a successful book; that it has been given the Harper award, and that it is predicted that it will sell. I realize the gratification of successful achievement and the necessity for making a living. I do, however, take issue with your reviewer of "Honey in the Horn," of August 24. It seems to me that his review shows a misconception of Oregon and Oregon history.

The Oregon Pioneer Association defines as pioneers those who were born in or settled in the Oregon territory prior to 1859. Dr. Clark, an Oregon historian, states that the pioneer period began with the arrival of the first settlers and may be said to have ended approximately when the first railway connection with the eastern United States was completed, in 1883. So his statement that the book, "Honey in the Horn," "contains a world . . . of pioneers, the world of Oregon in 1908, just before the railroads reached it," seems to me to be erroneous in two particulars, the accepted pioneer period and the date of our railroad connection. You may recollect that Oregon made her bow to the world in the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1905; only Ezra Meeker came in a covered wagon, and that was from sentiment only.

It is true there was a later migration into the vast area east of the Cascades, by sons of the early pioneers, the cattle men and the sheep men, and some of the country is still untapped by railroads and probably will always be, on account of easier and cheaper motor transportation. These settlers built up the great ranches where they employed many "hands," among whom were often the nomads, misfits, seasonal workers, and adventurers with whom Mr. Davis peoples his novel. They were the typical backwash of any country, but not the typical Oregon "pioneer," as your reviewer assumes.

SUSIE B. DILLARD, *Librarian*

St. Helens, Oregon.

Honey in the Horn

SIR:—How many readers of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, were moved by H. L. Davis's new novel to reread his poems in Harriet Monroe's "The New Poetry," and noticed that his poem, "The Valley Harvest" (p. 113, ed. 1925), begins with the words "Honey in the Horn"? If you haven't reread them I suggest that you do so and then hunt up some of his more recent poems in *Poetry* through the Readers' Guide.

KENNETH W. PORTER

Cambridge, Mass.

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T. S. Eliot's Drama of Becket

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL. By T. S. Eliot. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1935. $1.

Reviewed by F. O. MATTHIESSEN

THAT "Murder in the Cathedral" was produced at this summer's Canterbury Festival with apparently considerable success, should not surprise anyone who has tried reading it aloud. For not only do its lines fall naturally into spoken patterns, but, even more importantly, its structure is dramatically conceived *as a whole*, each of its two parts building strongly up to a climax. In this respect it is in marked contrast with Eliot's two previous experiments with drama. "Sweeney Agonistes," 1927, which broke away from the packed intricacy of his former poetry by attempting to utilize music-hall rhythms, was left as a fragment. "The Rock," which was written for production at Sadler's Wells last year, was more in the nature of a ritualistic pageant than a play.

But in this play presenting the martyrdom of Becket, the poet has worked out an original and effective form. Its general construction and its choruses bear a kinship to the kind of classical drama represented by Milton's "Samson"; in its characterization by types, especially in the four Tempters in the first part and the four Knights in the second, it shows a relationship also to the medieval morality plays. But it is naturally far more supple than these latter. The varied movement of its long lines seems often to have sprung from the response of the poet's ear to the cadences of the Bible and the Catholic Mass. As a result it demonstrates at last the fruitfulness of the belief that Eliot voiced in his "Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" in 1928, that the essentially dramatic quality of church ritual might again furnish a stimulation and release for poetic drama.

Recent criticism has tended to insist that a poet should find his material in his immediate surroundings, claiming that otherwise he takes refuge in a world of his own fancy and fails to portray an authentic relation with the urgent problems of society. And it is probably a matter of considerable skepticism to many readers as to wherein the career of a twelfth-century archbishop can have much relevancy to existence as they know it. What Eliot argued, in pointing out that Pound's translations from the early Italian poets are often much more "modern" than his contemporary sketches, seems to me far more searching: that "it is irrelevant whether what you see, really see, as a human being is Arnaut Daniel or your greengrocer"; the important consideration is to grasp the permanent elements in human nature. To what degree Eliot has grasped and portrayed such elements in this poem can be briefly suggested by a speech in which Thomas, addressing one of his Priests, meditates on the lot of the Chorus, the working women of Canterbury:

> They speak better than they know, and beyond your understanding.
> They know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer.
> They know and do not know, that acting is suffering
> And suffering is action. Neither does the actor suffer
> Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
> In an eternal action, an eternal patience
> To which all must consent that it may be willed
> And which all must suffer that they may will it,
> That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action
> And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still
> Be forever still.

The full weight and meaning of such a passage can be appreciated only in its

T. S. ELIOT

context; but it is at once apparent how closely its assumptions relate to Eliot's long absorption in the view of life that has been best expressed in poetry by Dante. Here, in this speech of Becket's, Eliot reveals an increased share of the depth of understanding which also characterizes Dante, not merely of an acute part of life but of its total pattern, a pattern that embraces not only "the eternal burden" but "the perpetual glory" as well. Here is a voicing of the subtle interweaving of suffering, striving, and acceptance that unite to form the attitude that finds expression in such a line in the "Paradiso" as

> la sua voluntade è nostra pace.

Here, in this mature reflection on the incalculably intricate relation between feeling and action, is the poetic statement of what Eliot has in mind when, discussing the relation of the individual to society, he refers to "the Catholic paradox: society is for the salvation of the individual and the individual must be sacrificed to society. Communism is merely a heresy, but a heresy is better than nothing."

The dramatic conflict in the first part of the work is an inner one, of a sort that shows Eliot even more clearly than ever in the tradition of Henry James, and, more especially here, of Hawthorne. For the conflict is Becket's struggle against pride and his final transcendence over it. The last Tempter speaks to him insidiously in words that had often been Becket's own thoughts, luring him on to martyrdom not as a result of losing his will in God's, but as an act of self-aggrandizement, as a final overweening of his pride. Tortured by a dilemma in which it seems to him that he can "neither act nor suffer without perdition," and where all existence consequently seems unreal, he fights his way through to his final resolve:

> Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:
> Temptation shall not come in this kind again.
> The last temptation is the greatest treason:
> To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

Thus fortified, his will at last made perfect in acceptance of God's will, he continues to maintain the supremacy of the law of God above the law of man, and goes forward, in the second part, to his death at the hands of the Knights.

It is upon his consecration to perseverance in his career and the world's denial of its value that the dramatic conflict of the second part hinges. Immediately after the murder, in the most effectively unexpected passage of the play, the Knights themselves turn to the audience, and, speaking in prose, conduct a systematic defense of their act. The writing of their speeches is masterly in its wit and irony: the Knights fall naturally into all the clichés of an actual present day parliamentary debate.

The contrast between them and Becket is thoroughly presented. Becket argues throughout—in passages which illuminate Eliot's apprehension of human history—that the Knights, by judging only from results, by deferring always to the appearance of social circumstance, have blurred all distinction between good and evil. In consequence of their conception of deterministic process, no individual can be blamed for oppression, exploitation, or crime that he undertakes in the cause of the State. There are only social forces and expediency, the responsibility of a human will for its own actions has been utterly lost. But in opposing this doctrine with his life, in reasserting the value of the idea as rising above that of the fact, Becket's is never a plea for the individual without the deepest obligations

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to society. His most characteristic tones sound in his experienced thoughts, again concluding in the image of the turning wheel, on the inexorability of man's fate as part of a force far greater than himself:

We do not know very much of the future
Except that from generation to generation
The same things happen again and again.
Men learn little from others' experience.
But in the life of one man, never
The same time returns. Sever
The cord, shed the scale. Only
The fool, fixed in his folly, may think
He can turn the wheel on which he turns.

The samples of the verse that I have been able to include here by no means suggest its freedom and variety. Never departing in any of his variations far enough from the norm of blank verse to break down his formal pattern, Eliot reveals throughout the controlled mastery of technique that, among other living poets writing in English, only Yeats can rival.

The lines quoted are sufficient, however, to show this play's principal defect. Though the language is both sharp and precise, it is extremely bare. It avails itself very little of the new life that comes from sensuous imagery; and compared with Eliot's early work, many passages, particularly those spoken by the Priests, seem attenuated. A relative lack of density also emerges in comparing the play as a whole with "The Waste Land." This is partly owing to the fact that in "The Waste Land" the poet employed symbols which maintained the action continually in the present at the same time that he was exploring analogies with the past. In the play, though centering throughout on problems that reveal the "permanent in human nature," he has not made that complete fusion. His imagination has not created the illusion of a four-dimensional world; the characters remain partly abstractions. Putting it in terms of the usual objection to historical fiction, one could say that the life represented is lacking something in immediacy and urgency, an objection that is forgotten only in the face of a "Coriolanus" or a "Phèdre." Nevertheless, this play—the title of which, with its unfortunately smart suggestion of a detective story I have done my best to avoid—even though it does not reach the rank of Eliot's most nearly perfect work of art, "Ash Wednesday," demonstrates how Eliot has survived both popularity and unpopularity, both generously bestowed frequently for the wrong reasons. He has gone on undistracted, cultivating and perfecting his craft, and bringing to bear upon it his accruing experience.

F. O. Matthiessen is an associate professor of English and history at Harvard University. His study entitled "The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry" is just appearing.

Escape from the Revolution

THE UNMAKING OF A RUSSIAN. By Nicholas Wreden. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1935. $3.

Reviewed by GRAHAM R. TAYLOR

UNDER this title one would expect, from an emigré Russian, a bitter emphasis on the destruction of the Russia he knew and loved and of the changes which robbed him of citizenship in his native land. Mr. Wreden, however, proves to be one of those extraordinary emigrés who is able to distinguish clearly between his personal feelings, wrapped up in the Old Russia, and his intellectual estimate of the forces which caused the upheaval and brought results which he believes to be productive of good.

This belief he has reached in retrospect. As a young student in the Naval Academy in St. Petersburg, when the revolution broke out, he identified himself with the Whites and believed that the future of Russia depended upon the White armies. He now sees that the White movement was "a lost cause from the beginning," whether it aspired to reëstablish the monarchy, "counter to the temper of the people," or to create a constitutional democratic state, impossible because of the "indifference and low educational level" of the masses. And, had the Whites been victorious with a formula of the Fascist or Nazi type, "it is an open question whether the sum total of its achievements could have been greater than that of the Soviet government, or whether it could have made the course of Russian history less painful."

For most American readers the interest of this book will not lie in Mr. Wreden's remarkably objective view of the historical process, the results of which must be left, he points out, to future historians to appraise; nor even in such passages as that in which he tersely refers to the failure of the Allies to be guided by the sound advice their representatives in Russia sent to London and Paris. It will be found in the vivid account of his personal experiences.

NICHOLAS WREDEN, RUSSIAN

Photographed in Copenhagen, 1917, in a uniform lent him by the British.

NICHOLAS WREDEN, AMERICAN

From a recent photograph.

We have had a succession of Russian "thrillers." As a story of adventure, Mr. Wreden's book stands second to none of them, either in the dramatic quality of what befell him or in the graphic telling of it. But his arrest by the Cheka and his escape, and even his flight across the border into Finland, absorbing as his account of them is, follow to some degree the pattern of similar adventures elsewhere recorded. The distinctive and illuminating part of Mr. Wreden's book is the description of his experiences with the White armies in the small Baltic states, following his escape from Russia. Most revealing is his account of the suspicion and antagonism with which these men were regarded by the local populations in Esthonia, Latvia, and even in Finland. In some degree, therefore, his exciting narrative contributes to needed understanding of a complex welter of forces in the period just after the war. A critical reader will find some points of inconsistency and an occasional inaccuracy in interpreting the significance of a personality or event, but by and large the book is an unusually honest effort to set forth experiences so intense as to preclude, in most authors, any possibility of objectivity.

Graham Romeyn Taylor is director of the division of publications of the Commonwealth Fund. In 1922, as a member of the commission of the National Information Bureau, he went to Russia to study and report upon famine relief.

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Lord of the Forest

SMITH. By Branch Cabell. New York: Robert M. McBride. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

Mr. Smith thus remained neither more nor less than the sole survivor anywhere of an immemorial mythology so very ancient that it had nowadays been forgotten by everybody, including himself.

AN author has lived a life of fantasy and is now endeavoring to face plain facts about himself, but is unable to do so in an unsymbolic manner. This, to me, is the essence of Mr. Cabell's "Smith."

"Smith" is the second limb of a trilogy of which "Smirt" was the first and "Smire" will be the third. Naturally it is all about the lands beyond common-sense and the forest of Branlon, where Mr. Smith is a local god; and is packed with mythology from every known land, age, and clime, Mr. Cabell being the greatest modern connoisseur of mythology as applied to fiction.

This fooling, not always delicious, and always extremely mannered—a characteristic of it that some find annoying—is intricately clever, and quietly (to use a locution dear to this rough metropolis) "kids the pants off" the real and presumably civilized world. But it does so in somewhat moonbeam fashion.

"Now the tale speaks" (as Mr. Cabell would say) of Mr. Smith and the adventures of the sons of Mr. Smith. For Mr. Smith as Smirt in the former volume, begot four children, though Urc Tabaron, the wizard, will only agree to grant him five magics whereby to "draw out of an old dream . . . five human-shaped illusions." And so it is done.

The allegory of all this and the particular satire on parents and children is hard to disengage from the fabric of words in which it is tapestried. Just exactly *what* Mr. Cabell is saying is not of such immediate importance to the reader as the way in which he is saying it. In the end Mr. Smith admits—and thereby his author admits—that he "in spite of my wit and my fancy and my erudition, must always be the shared of two commonplaces," which are love and death, and "they are indivisible, my heart tells me." So the eternal quest for love really only ends with death, though at the end of this particular book the Lord of the Forest is happy "at this fine moment, at this special and wholly splendid clock-tic," knowing it is a happiness but temporary.

The hand of this author has not lost its cunning. He has always inhabited a world entirely of his own, and if you are not tired of adventures thither you will find both beauty and humor here. As well as absorbing all the mythologies of the world he has succeeded in elaborating one of his own in a fashion that will remain a remarkable feat in American letters.

EDWARD HARRIS HETH

A Story of Youth

SOME WE LOVED. By Edward Harris Heth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

SINCE Robert Herrick, youth has been enjoined to gather rosebuds while it could; but with that perversity which age steadily sees in youth, youth has instead gone about the business of gathering garlands for the dead. So Edward Heth in this story of young folk bound to unfulfilment in Milwaukee writes of a youth as timeless as those who disregard Herrick in his life time, as those who left Princeton in jazz-time with Fitzgerald, and those who hid their sensitiveness in Pernod around tables at the *Dome* and the *Cupole* with Hemingway.

"Some We Loved" is the story of Paul Bingham, young, callow English instructor in the University, and his loss first of his father, shrewd, straight professional gambler, whom Paul loved though there was no understanding between the skilful father and the fumbling boy; and then of Laurie Matthias, who left him, though she loved him, because her father, the tempestuous, moody composer, Carl Matthias, needed her in his life. But the book is far more than Paul's story. He is only the central one of the human and appealing company whose lives Mr. Heth writes to an unravelled ending. As much as Paul's, the book is the story of the Matthias family. But, for me at least, it was in the character of the little Dorman, gifted, drunken, and damned that Mr. Heth, in drawing a character tragic in comedy and comic in tragedy, showed himself to be a young novelist opulent in promise.

He has written ably, sensitively, and vividly the newest story of our newest young. They may be the depression young, like young Dorman, the intelligent children of a world which is not interested in their abilities. But they are also the eternal young, waiting to be wounded. Mr. Heth has presented them in a book that deserves high praise.

"How's Your Wild Man?"

JOSEPH CONRAD AND HIS CIRCLE. By Jessie Conrad. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1935. $3.75.

IT has been assumed by some reviewers that Conrad enthusiasts would be shocked by this book. The only person likely to have been seriously shocked would be Joseph Conrad himself. He once expressed a strong distaste for "Conrad en pantoufles." Here he is in every condition of intimate undress. Few such detailed narratives of personal and domestic eccentricity can ever have been published. Deplorable, yes; but (let's be honest) very delightful too. On every ground of taste and tact the book should be regretted; but those who read it with understanding and sympathy will find it moving.

When Jessie George first met her future husband (in 1893) he was still chief officer of the *Torrens*, and the gilt initials inside his shore-going bowler were K. K. (Konrad Korzeniowski). Mrs. Conrad, chatting as she would to old family friends, takes us through the details of J. C.'s unexpected courtship; the sudden proposal (in the National Gallery) on the score that the weather was fair, that he wouldn't live long, and that there wouldn't be any family. The description of the ceremonial dinners in a restaurant near Victoria Station, even the fallen window-blind on the wedding night, and Conrad seasick on the honeymoon Channel crossing are (to clear our minds of nicenellying cant) as amusing as anything in recent print. And so it goes throughout the thirty years of their companionship. By all genteel canons, one should grow a little horrified at this picture of the most difficult husband on record. Actually that high-strung temperamental man and his even-hearted and courageous wife, become understandably admirable. Life is a much queerer farrago than most histories of literature are likely to admit.

Probably the reading of this remarkable book should be restricted to the wives and families of writers, artists, or other eccentrics. Only they can appreciate to the full the inconvenience of cohabitation with the unaccountable. It would be easy to write a savory review by picking out lively anecdotes from Mrs. Conrad's narrative. "How's your wild man?" the village children in Essex used to shout at her. But this book deserves better than sensational excerpt. Both comic and tragic, it deserves reading. Mrs. Conrad makes no attempt at "literary" comment. She leaves the mystery of genius exactly where it was. But from the oddity of the outward gesture one can guess the high tension current within. Joseph Conrad as husband was like the tray of burning alcohol which the calm and courageous woman held on her lap when immovable with an invalid knee.

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

I NOTICED in a London bookseller's catalogue that a first edition of Dr. Johnson's *The Prince of Abissynia* (Edmund Gosse's copy) is offered for sale at £40. The tale was not known as *Rasselas* until after Johnson's death. The only thing worth knowing that has come to me from reading many sorry dispatches from Africa is that the name Rasselas should probably be written Ras Selas; apparently Ras is an Ethiopian prefix of honor. Ras Selas evidently means something not unlike Prince Selassie.

There's a passage in *The Prince of Abissynia* (1759) that has almost a painful timeliness. It's in the famous chapter on the art of flying:—

> "If all men were virtuous," returned the artist, "I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once, with irresistible violence, upon the capital of a fruitful region, that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated."

A pleasant item of random information comes in a letter from B. D. H. of Raleigh, N. C. Raleigh's distinguished literary sorority is called the Cynthia Book Club, because Sir Walter and other Elizabethans used Cynthia as their literary nickname for the great Queen.

A member of the U. S. diplomatic service writes from a Far Eastern assignment:—

"I notice that the S. R. L. is asking readers what they have been reading and that most of the replies are listing comparatively recent books. By and large, I have been steering clear of the new fiction,—it's too shallow. The most recent book I have read is Vincent Sheean's *Personal History*. There is a book you can really dig your teeth into. I found it very disturbing, I presume because I have gone through, and am still doing so, to a certain extent, many of the mental struggles he chronicles. At times he is unconsciously amusing as when he relates his being jailed in Spain and how, after his release he went to the American Embassy and Hallett Johnson, the Chargé, showed him the telegram received from the State Department instructing the Embassy to investigate. Sheean goes on to say something to this effect: 'And it was signed by Hughes himself!' Of course, every telegram which goes out from the Department, whether it be in regard to signing a treaty or forwarding a new regulation for the marking of sardines, is signed by the Secretary of State, or whoever happens to be Acting Secretary at the moment. I should say 'bears the signature of,' rather than 'signed.' Anyway, it is a fine book and worth all the blurbs.

"The only other recent book I have read is *Road to War* by Walter Millis and it too deserves a wide reading. Other reading has been Charles Whibley's *Book of Scoundrels*, *Dreamthorp* for the second time, and O. O. McIntyre's famous source book, *John Mistletoe*, also for the second time. Have you read much of Charles Whibley's stuff? I have four of his, all firsts and am now on the lookout for more. Most of them I'm saving for reading on cold winter nights with a whiskey-soda and a dog curled up before me. They're that kind of books. Do you suppose Moll Cutpurse, of whom he writes, was the origin of the term Gunman's Moll?"

Jay Sigmund in Cedar Rapids has been doing some more investigating in the history of the whaling village of Waubeek, Iowa. Waubeek is a long way from the sea but we can with some justice call it a whaling village: Mr. Sigmund has heard of no less than nine Massachusetts whalemen who settled there about the middle of last century.

Among many maritime souvenirs preserved in Waubeek homesteads is the log of the whaling barque *Pacific* on a voyage from New Bedford to New Zealand in 1865. This belongs to Jay Sigmund's neighbor Mr. Henry J. Hood, whose father was first mate of the *Pacific*. I've been looking at some extracts from the log and am interested to note that the morality of taking whales on Sunday was an issue of conscience with these sturdy old New Englanders. For instance:—

"It will be perceived that three out of five of our whales have been taken on Sunday. The question arises: is it right or wrong? The pseudo-moralist I know would at once pronounce it as the latter, and say that in whaling on Sunday we do violence to the laws of God and man. I am not one of those sailors who profess to believe that Sabbath should have no existence when off soundings, but if the man who goes months and at times much longer without seeing whales, is to blame for taking them whenever he has an opportunity, my reckoning is very much at fault."

"Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with emulation instead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter, (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued."

—*The Translators to the Reader*
(original preface to the King James Bible, 1611.)

From an Oldtime Client

It is a long time, my dear sir, since you heard from me; only the very old habitués of the Green will recall my name. I haven't been in New York for a long time; imagine my pleasure to find the city campaigning for more silence. In all the publicity I see no mention of Mrs. Isaac Rice who founded so long ago the Society for the

FARM NEAR ELMIRA WHERE MARK TWAIN SUMMERED
Photographs on this and next page by kindness of Wilbur C. Hadden.

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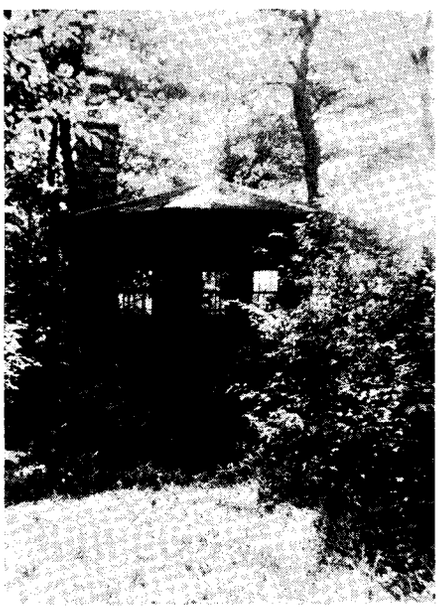
Suppression of Unnecessary Noise. You may remember also the poem by Waldo Peirce? . . . Always a partisan of silence and obscurity I bought a book (*Book-Verse,* edited by W. Roberts; London 1896) simply because its editor dedicated it to Humphry Ward, who was always so retiring while his wife rode high in the press.

I've been in Sweden. Coming back to N. Y. seems these were the first things I noticed. That the column of society notes in the Herald Tribune is delightfully called *Personal Intelligence,* a fine old 18th century usage. That show business is picking up: once more I see groups of actors chattering together at noon outside the Actors Equity Association rooms on 47 Street. That one of the most interesting bookshops in America has moved to new quarters (Westermann's, now on 48 Street). That a well-known radio announcer is doing simultaneous commercial statements on two competing programs simultaneously; which raises so many interesting subtleties (or sophistries) of business philosophy that I won't go into them. That Chris Cella the restaurateur on East 45 Street to whom you once introduced me, devilled all summer long by rebuilding operations, has put up in despair the sign ALTERATIONS AS USUAL DURING BUSINESS. That on the Daily News Building, which is very handsome, there is the truncated motto (over a frieze of proletarian figures) *There are so many of them.* It was clever of the architect (Raymond Hood?) to leave off the first part of Lincoln's saying—or, painful thought, is it carved somewhere higher up on the building where I can't see it? Anyhow it's one of the best inscriptions in your town.

19000 new benches have been ordered for the city parks, I read; seems odd, this time of year? I was on my way to see the Open Air Library (I wanted to reread some O. Henry, to see how he's lasting)



MARK TWAIN'S OUTDOOR STUDY

and I met an old newspaper man on the street. He was in a Behind-the-Scenes mood and remarked that he had just left the next President of the United States. Naturally I was interested. Who's that? I asked. He hedged a bit. "Well," he said—"they don't want to bring him out into the open just yet."

I heard you had appendicitis this summer. Do you know what McBurney's Point is? Ask your doctor. Well, New York is the McBurney's Point of America. . . . Now I'm going back to Boston and another decade of silence; unless I feel disposed to send you one of my brash summaries of the literary situation as it looks to a mere reader. I'm always sorry for you boys who have to support literature as an industry. Think of Santayana having written a Novel. (I'm rather dubious about that.) Here's the toast I learned in Sweden: *Din skal, min skal; alla vackra flickor skal.*

E. TENEBRIS LUX (Harvard, '02).

Mark Twain: Anti-Victorian

(*Continued from page* 4)

the theme or the story, and obviously and rightly did not interest Twain. It is only our latter-day realists who feel that no household tale is complete without a bathroom or backhouse record. The evidence of the note book is clear, that if Mark had been left uncensored there would have been more water closets and many more mentions of fornication in his published books, but there is no evidence that his books would have been improved, or that anything which seemed to him really valuable was left out.

Nor was it the dominant capitalism of the East that oppressed him when he came to live with it. He knew greed from the beginning, and the love of money-making (which he shared) seemed to him a disagreeable but inevitable vice. He said all he wanted to say about it, wrote more about it than most writers not proletarians get into their books. No society could have been more predatory than the West of his youth.

His oppression, I think, was religious and ethical. If I read the notebooks aright, it was the American and English nineteenth century blend of Christianity, tempered by Deism, and stuffed with ideas of progress and the perfectibility of man, that made him rage. And the especial brand that infuriated him most was precisely the sanctimonious holier-than-thou and the-Lord-cares-for-his-own and love-God-and-you-will-be-happy religion which was on every respectable American lip in the America he first knew as an adult. The travelling preachers, the missionaries, the prohibitionists, the mean-spirited parsons of "Innocents Abroad"—these men got his goat early and kept it. There was no personal prejudice. A parson like his life-long friend, Twichell, of Hartford, kept his love to the end. But an independence of mind which you can call pioneer, or pre-Victorian, or innate as you please, made him take with immense and perhaps unnecessary seriousness the public opinion of religious America. He had seen too much of rough life, and later he had too many unhappy experiences, to believe in it for a minute. Why it injured him so; why he struck back so hard, I do not know; but I think it was because, like Whitman, he was a great democrat, and an intense humanitarian. He could not endure that the injustices and sufferings of real men and women whom he loved, and the vileness and selfishness of real men and women he hated, should be minimized by a cheap and untenable philosophy of all-is-for-the-best in a world where God chastens his loved ones in order that progress shall dwell in the land.

This public opinion oppressed him, but most certainly it did not suppress him, in spite of the admitted efforts of Olivia, his wife, to keep him from speaking out his mind in direct attack. If he had published diatribes against Christianity and progress as vivacious and devastating as his attack on Christian Science, they would undoubtedly have increased his stature as a public figure, and made him a voice of his times. But they would not have added an inch to his girth as a man-of-letters or a humorist. There he did his job in the concrete, without much argument, by indirection. The satire of Huck Finn is not a philosophy, yet is it inseparable from the idyllic romance of youth astray on the great river.

I have, of course, only touched in this review upon the literary qualities of Twain's books which will make a few of them—certainly one of them—permanent in the literature of English. Only touched also upon the too exuberant expenditure of small change which keeps him, in three quarters of his work, on the plane of journalism, a servant of the public, seeking (lecturer that he was) quick laughter and noisy applause. This is his centenary, a time to assess rather than to analyze, and in any case I have no space to attempt both. "I have been hailed as the foremost humorist of the nineteenth century," he said just before his death. "Perhaps I am. Certainly I have been the most conspicuous." He was the foremost humorist because he was the most sincere, if not the most conspicuous, pessimist. In an age of booming optimism when statesmen, bankers, and poets cheerfully asserted that God was in his heaven and all was right with the world, he profoundly disbelieved in both propositions. Yet he loved the world of his time with the heartiness of a Dickens and the wisdom of a Chaucer, and so his satire was edged with pity, his burlesque implied a troubled philosophy, and his characters were never too bright or good for human nature's daily food. How could they be! He knew too much of the pulse of the machine, which the Victorians were so sure was beating toward a moral and prosperous state.

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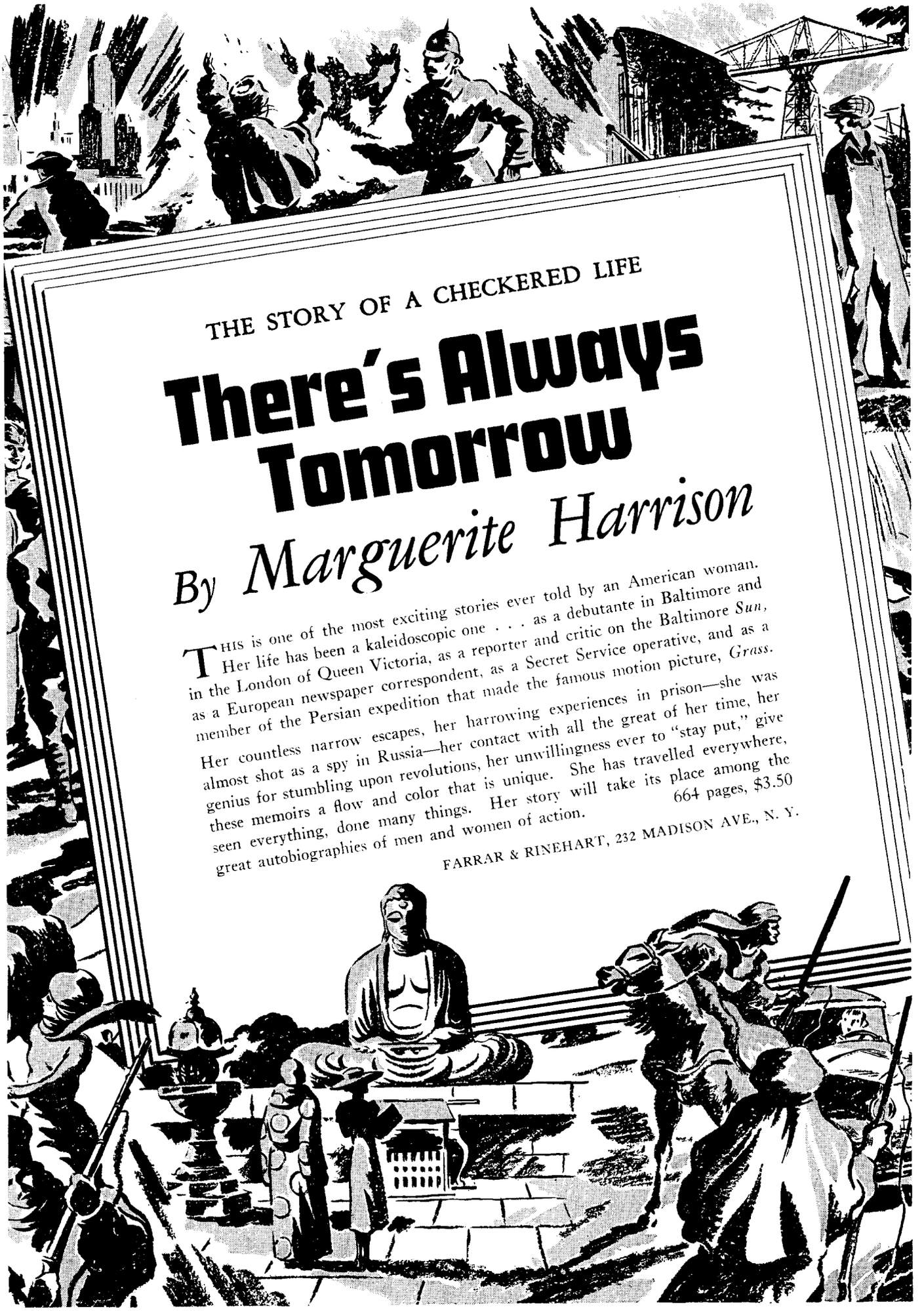

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The PHŒNIX NEST

BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I TAKE it back. Communism—at least the Russian brand, which is communism at its purest and simplest—has a sense of humor. Or rather, shall I say that the Soviets have found their humorist; who is, by the way, a lot more effective than our own "Redder than the Rose" man—I forget his communistic pseudonym. This burst of enthusiasm on my part springs from the fact that last night I saw *Katayev's* farce, "Squaring the Circle." Today my favorite dramatic critic, *Gil Gabriel,* who knew all about it beforehand, seems to have been pretty bored and tired by what the director, *Dmitri Ostrov,* did to it. And it is undoubtedly overemphasized and too long-drawn-out.

One slight example. In the last act, the first time the communist poet, *Emilian Tonkonogov,* cries "Sabotage!" it is really funny. But when he has cried it for about the fourth time, it is funny no longer. Mr. Ostrov seems to think that a New York audience is so thick-headed that every point must be driven into their brains with a sledge. He's pretty nearly right, but those of us who are, after all, not quite so stupid, suffer for it. . . . Neither am I praising this farce because of the fun it pokes at communistic seriousness. As a matter of fact, I think it is the most effective propaganda for communism that I have encountered so far. There is something intensely admirable about the young people of the story struggling along in loyalty to the cause. All decent young people want a cause of some kind to fight for. The stupidity of American conservatives chiefly resides in the fact that they can offer the youth of the country no sort of cause that is worth a tinker's damn; no unselfish way of life intelligent or humane enough to be worth lifting a finger for. All they offer youth are knavish politics, stop-gap social remedies, the ballyhoo of demagogues, and the cut and dried comment of the daily press. . . . I have often thought bitterly concerning those we call patriots. We don't know the meaning of the word patriotism. Until we get together and work out some equitable plan of our own that will insure a livelihood to every man who wishes to work—just for a starter—we can only be ashamed of this land of abundance where men starve in the streets of our cities. No, I have *not* become a communist. I am merely becoming a patriot. . . . But nobody in America has a right to that title now—and as for hundred percent Americanism, that was always the biggest laugh of the age—a perfect bulwark behind which hid the crooks, the panders, the Simon Legrees, and the robber barons.

Anyway, I hope "Squaring the Circle" gets played all over the country. If it has led me into a tirade, I am sorry; for—with some judicious cutting—it will yet make a wholly enjoyable evening. The final curtain is a knockout! . . . No, *The Phoenix Nest* is not going wholly theatrical, though by chance I have recently witnessed about four openings, and want to say this one word more. In spite of all criticisms of it I happen to have been one of those who deeply enjoyed *Maxwell Anderson's* "Winterset." I am not a dramatic critic, so I was free to enjoy myself. One of the most superb feats of acting I have ever seen (accomplished, of course, with utter naturalness and without any overstress) was that of *Burgess Meredith* in the role of the young avenger. I do not believe "Winterset" to be Mr. Anderson's masterpiece, but I do think it has elements of being a great play. And why in thunder any semi-literate critic should jib at hearing fine and significant language well spoken on the stage is beyond my comprehension. I suppose they're ashamed to profess a liking for anything better than "dem, dese, and dose." . . . My, I seem to be full of pep this week-end! It's really because I have contracted a cold and it lends a sort of desperate outlook to life. I know I'm not discussing authors at the moment—aside from two dramatists—but at least I'm talking about what interests me. . . . While *John Steinbeck's* "Tortilla Flat" is a swell picture of a certain quarter of Monterey, hotel clerks out there are still busy explaining that Mr. Steinbeck wrote his books without benefit of the Chamber of Commerce. They don't want people to run away with the idea that Monterey is populated solely by amiable loafers! . . .

The city editor of a big newspaper comes in contact with practically all the strangest phenomena of American life. And *Stanley Walker* has not only been city editor of the *New York Herald Tribune,* but also managing editor of the *New York Daily Mirror,* though he's now with the *New Yorker.* He knows profoundly the average American's admiration of eccentricity. This month you'll get a new book from him, through Stokes, called "Mrs. Astor's Horse." Therein you will find a review of American taste as displayed in such phenomena as the life and times of *Daddy Browning,* the ambition of gangsters to be buried in splendor, the doings of *Aimée Semple MacPherson,* and so on. The material is so rich you could cut it with a knife!

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 80)

A. M. LINDBERGH—"NORTH TO THE ORIENT"

Next to rivers, man's gleaming cement roads which he has built with such care look fragile as paper streamers thrown over the hills, easily blown away. Even the railroads seem only scratched in with a penknife.

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A NOTE ON BOOK COLLECTING

BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

There are two sorts of book collecting: of books fine and memorable in themselves, and of "items" that are merely rare—and generally monstrously expensive. Devotees of the second sort of collecting I suspect of being just such exhibitionists as are the dreary people who are renowned for having the largest house on Myrtle Avenue or the costliest limousine in Omaha or the longest string of honorary degrees in the university. To possess one of the three copies extant of a dingy little pamphlet written by Thomas Hardy before he knew better; to hunt down, and pay real book-money for, one of the second issue of the first edition of a Kipling novel (the issue in which, on page 7, Smith is spelled Smiht); this is less noble than stamp collecting. No, the collection of books for their rarity ranks with the collection of walking sticks, match books, or the shirts of movie heroes.

But the collection of books that are distinguished in themselves, that are a delight to the hand as they are to the eye, that are masterful in paper, in binding, in the arrangement of the page, this is not so very different from the collection of superior paintings—and it is a hundred times or so more possible for purses that are none too fat.

Yet even such books, I hear from friends far richer than I, are too costly for them. Well, these lads will spend two or three or four thousand for a car; three or four hundred for a radio; four hundred a month for rent, and think nothing of it—and a heavenly collection of fine books could be made, I know, at not more than an average of ten dollars apiece. I think that I would rather leave to my two boys, just as my father left me his leather Milton, a hundred or so books, each of which should be a delight that would last a hundred or so years, rather than the remains of a ten-year-old Rolls Royce, the cabinet of an obsolete radio, and a bunch of rent receipts!

This Note is part of a short Essay by Sinclair Lewis which is printed as a preface to "Samples: a book containing many fine pages from the books to be published by The Limited Editions Club in its Seventh Series." "Samples" is a big and valuable book, intended to persuade properly interested people to apply for a membership in the Club during the coming year. If *you* are properly interested, you can have a copy for yourself by writing immediately to Mr. Stanley R. Lockwood, The Limited Editions Club, 551 Fifth Avenue, N.Y.

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SOME PEOPLE. By Harold Nicolson. *Houghton Mifflin.*

WHY MEN FIGHT. By Bertrand Russell. *Appleton-Century.*

THE ORDEAL OF MARK TWAIN. By Van Wyck Brooks. *Dutton.*

On Hobbies Again

Two letters have come in to me on the subject of Hobbies. One from J. C. B. of Indianapolis, Ind., *asks for an exhaustive list of hobbies and wonders whether the government has printed anything of the sort; the other from* J. L. J. of Pawtucket, R. I., *requests the names of "books or literature which touch on the hobbies of great people; for, instance, the hobby of Louis XVI for making locks for chests and doors, and the hobby of Dr. Johnson for collecting orange peels."*

THE best and most comprehensive work on the subject I know is the paper bound booklet, edited by Earnest Elmo Calkins for the Leisure League of America and put out at its headquarters, 2 Rockefeller Center, New York City for the small price of twenty-five cents. The little volume has an introduction by Walter B. Pitkin and an extensive bibliography compiled by Hugh Brotherton. After some chapters of more or less general discussion on the value of hobbies in an age whose economic system seems to hold the prospect of increasing leisure for all classes it gets down to business with a sort of catechism designed to reveal his own aptitudes and tastes to any particular individual, and follows up its questions with exhaustive lists of books covering the wide variety of subjects which lend themselves to becoming recreative. Bee culture, the training of animals, landscape gardening, games of skill, of brawn, and of brain, music, archery, mountain climbing, model making, leather working, reading, navigation—these are but a few of the broad array of occupations covered. The introductory chapters of the booklet contain numerous references which should yield grist for J. L. J.'s mill, for the hobbies of a considerable number of notabilities (in the main contemporaries rather than historical figures) are recounted.

There's another useful pamphlet, intended primarily for young folk, but containing much that is of interest to their elders, in THE CHOICE OF A HOBBY, by Anne Carroll Moore. This "springboard for personal adventure," as its author, the distinguished librarian and writer for children, calls it, is reprinted from COMPTON'S PICTURED ENCYCLOPEDIA (Compton: Chicago), and contains a well selected and useful list of books to assist in the pursuit of hobbies.

The Island of Ceylon

Could you (writes E. F. of Stockton, Calif.*) give me the names of books from which I can gain information in regard to Ceylon? Is there any fiction with this island for a background? I have Powell's* LAST HOME OF MYSTERY *and Kirkland's* FINDING THE WORTHWHILE IN THE ORIENT."

Mr. E. V. Lucas, that prolific writer and indefatigable loiterer along the paths of travel, has a book called DOWN THE SKY (Lippincott), which is ostensibly a novel though actually rather a collection of essays. Through it runs a loose thread of love story which carries its hero through England and eventually deposits him in Ceylon. Leonard Woolf's THE VILLAGE IN THE JUNGLE (Harcourt, Brace) tells the sad tale of two beautiful girls whose father is persecuted by the headsman of a Cingalese village, and there's a novel by Fanny E. Penny, published in England by Chatto, and not at all in this country as far as I can discover, called A LOVE OFFENSIVE, which is a war story whose English hero, escaped from the Germans, finds his way to Ceylon.

As for description of the island which is divorced from use as background material for fiction there is JUNGLE TIDE (Houghton Mifflin), by John Still, whose long residence in the country enabled him to write with authority not only of its scenic aspects and its economic and political features but of the lore and customs of its inhabitants; and W. W. Strickland's TRAVEL LETTERS FROM CEYLON, AUSTRALIA, AND SOUTH INDIA (Westermann). Pages 3-40 of William Beebe's PHEASANT JUNGLES (Putnam) depict Ceylon, and pages 251-88 of Harry A. Franck's A VAGABOND JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD (Appleton-Century) cover it. There's a useful school text on the island, if E. F. wants anything as specifically educational as that, in Cameron Morrison's NEW GEOGRAPHY OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE AND CEYLON (Nelson). If she wants material on the religion of the section she will find interesting discussion in Kenneth J. Saunders's STORY OF BUDDHISM (Oxford University Press), which devotes pages 76-98 to the religion of Ceylon.

A Magazine on Steamships

R. F. McG. of Sierra Madre, Calif. *is on the hunt for an English magazine of which he has heard, dealing with steamships, and containing photographs, plans, and descriptions of new ships as they are built and put into service.*

I have not seen the publication myself but from the information I could glean I imagine the periodical to which R. F. McG. has reference is *The Shipbuilding and Shipping Record,* a journal of shipbuilding, marine engineering, docks, harbors, and shipping, published by Transport, Ltd., 33 Foothill Street, London, S.W.1.

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The New Books

Biography

SINGING IN THE WILDERNESS. A Salute to John James Audubon. By Donald Culross Peattie. Putnam. 1935. $2.50.

Audubon has been very much biographied. It must be admitted that he is somewhat sentimentalized in this book which, nevertheless, has a great deal of charm, although it contributes nothing new about the great ornithologist except the author's dramatization of scenes which are known to have taken place in his life. Mr. Peattie himself recently published "An Almanac for Moderns" which was a series of day-by-day observations of nature in America. He knows his birds and he knows the American background but is best understood as belonging, like Herbert Sass, Archibald Rutledge, Samuel Scoville, and various other contemporary writers, to the sentiment school of American nature writing. He has been discovered by the New York reviewers who since their recent migrations to Connecticut and other commuting country districts have developed a sense for nature which is fresh rather than convincing. Indeed, the most hardboiled sophisticates among them seem to have yielded up their hearts most readily to the charms of the grackle and the phoebe bird. They overestimate Mr. Peattie as a nature writer, presumably because he apparently is the first that they have read. Nevertheless his book *is* charming and it is refreshing to see this perennial tradition of American authorship coming once again in fashion. It has a long way to go, however, before it again touches peaks reached by Thoreau and even, at his rare best, by John Burroughs.

H. S. C.

OLDER PEOPLE. By Hector Bolitho. Appleton-Century. 1935. $3.50.

A New Zealander born homesick for beauty and for life with a patina, Hector Bolitho in his twenties fled from provincial crudity and ugliness and found his desired haven in England, in London, in Windsor. He basked almost voluptuously in the mellow light of England's past, her old places and buildings and people. The journalistic bohemians and literary lions of London disappointed him: her publicists and politicians, with one or two exceptions, left him cold. His taste was for aged canons, well crusted deans, retired service men; about all of whom hung the atmosphere of a past in which his fancy chiefly lived. In these "older people" he found embodied something of the ease, the authority, the sense of stability which his own generation lacked, even in England. We learn from these engaging papers how naturally it came about that the home-coming provincial, after some experiments with the novel, settled to biography, and to biography on the up side.

It is natural that one of his temper should have found himself more at ease with the survivors of what we may call his pet past, than with the rude young modern crew who made mock of it. His roaring deans and gentle canons lifted him from the embarrassments of the present to the safe and pleasant paths of yesterday. And it was from these older people that he "slowly came to know England as a storehouse of beautiful things." Of the stress and turmoil of our time this book says nothing. It is a book of old people, old times, old things, old thoughts; a filial book in which older people, at least, may taste a mild refreshment.

H. W. B.

Fiction

THE DAYS DIVIDING. By Neil Bell. Little Brown. 1935. $2.50.

At first the reader of "The Days Dividing" will be bewildered by the abruptness with which it changes from one set of characters to another; but after a few chapters, with the help of the allusion to Swinburne's "The days dividing lover and lover," he will easily anticipate the course of the pattern. We follow alternately the careers of a young man and a young woman, see them several times cross each other's paths without meeting, and at last, after many vicissitudes, find each other and fall in love for the final curtain. It is a plan which, though a little obvious, has the advantage of allowing Mr. Bell scope for the variety of incidents and scenes of which he is fond; his pages are full of English and Irish scenery, lovable eccentrics, and mildly humorous little people. But, from the very fact that the climax is so easily foreseen, it ought to be a strong one; and it can only be that if the hero and heroine are each of them sufficient to give meaning to life for the other. But Mr. Bell, having a theme which involves the idea of coincidence or destiny, carries it so far that everything in the lives of his two leading actors is determined by coincidence.

It must be said that the book is pleasantly written, and will no doubt appeal to the class of readers for which it was intended, the people who pay an author to tell them that the world is full of surprises and eccentric strangers with fortunes, and that it is never too late to love; but readers who still like a hero and a heroine to have a little more of the heroic than is found in a checker-man will be disappointed.

B. D.

BRASS-EAGLES. By Sarah Atherton. Lippincott. 1935. $2.

Miss Atherton's attitude toward Brass-Eagles, the "greatest department store in the world," is coldly satirical beneath a dispassionate surface. When George Greyhawk, full-blooded Chippewa Indian, a weary and stupefied wanderer from his Reservation, comes to New York as a Brass-Eagles night watchman, Miss Atherton attempts to set natural, savage simplicities against high-tension urban commercialism. The contrast is so startling, the opposing elements so lacking in any perceptible congruity, that the novel becomes more a melodramatic incident than an effective indictment of Brass-Eagles and its kind. Instead of a significant struggle between personalities caught in and modified by a great store, the novel pre-

Death was waiting for these men, 26,542 feet in the air, on the peak of Nanga Parbat, queen of the Western Himalayas. . . .

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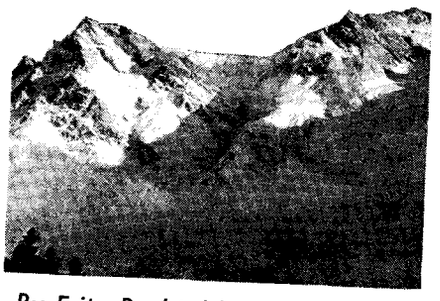

By Fritz Bechtold, one of the survivors. Illustrated with 114 superb photographs. Published by Dutton, $3. . . .

NANGA PARBAT ADVENTURE

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sents merely a curious juxtaposition of antagonistic forces. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether many of Miss Atherton's readers will accept George Greyhawk as a serious character.

The urban characters, however, are immediately recognizable, and usually significant of a good deal beyond themselves: especially Isabel, the efficient information clerk at Brass-Eagles, and Percy, her nondescript husband, assistant dairy-products buyer for a chain of food stores. Their marriage is an unlovely, crippled thing, too weak to resist the intrusion of the violence and tragedy that comes with George Greyhawk. And dominating every character and scene, Brass-Eagles is detailed by Miss Atherton with a contempt only occasionally lightened by a half-grudging admiration.

R. B. M.

Miscellaneous

QUACK QUACK! By Leonard Woolf. Harcourt, Brace. 1935. $2.

In times when, as one commentator observes, "the barbarians are at the gates," a defense of rationality is in order. Such is the task which the editor of the London *Political Quarterly* has set himself, tracing the roots of savagery in modern civilization through many an intricate sophistication of fear and folly.

In the realm of politics, the author demonstrates that dictatorships are the fruit of the emotional instability brought on by the breakdown of the pre-war system: they impose a "unity" of the corral or the revival-meeting on their bewildered subjects. To maintain this unity, all such governments uphold a strict censorship, conduct a thorough endoctrination of youthful proselytes, and offer up scapegoats on the altars of national pride. These measures, exclusive of specialized beliefs (such as the efficiency of the corporate organization, the importance of so-called "Aryan blood," and the inherent sinfulness of the bourgeois class) all reflect an attempt to escape by force from the dilemmas of an increasingly complicated world. They resemble the ceremonies of aborginal magic, designed to placate hostile spirits.

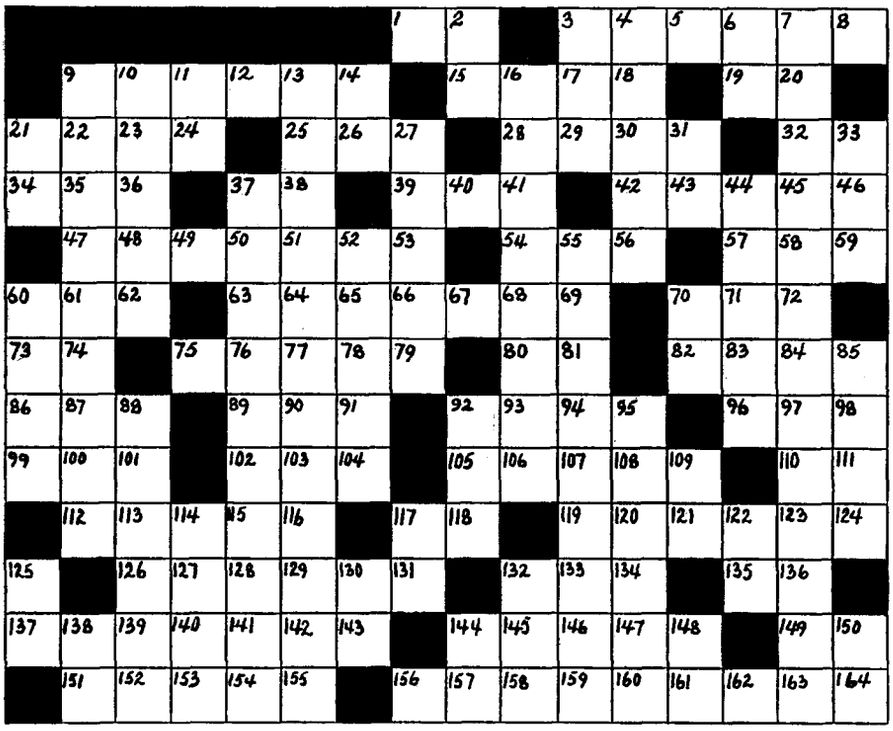
Some sort of theoretical justification has, of course, preceded these developments. In the nineteenth century, Hegel and Fichte, Carlyle and Nietzsche glorified instinct and passion beyond intelligence and reason. It remained for Bergson to resurrect the idea of divine inspiration, under the innocuous name of "intuition," which gives knowledge incapable of proof and even, as Mr. Woolf points out, of rational expression. The popularity of revealed (as opposed to demonstrated) truth was accelerated by the propaganda of the war, through which so many intellectuals degraded their heritage for patriotic purposes, until, at present, the burden of indecision is lifted from weary minds by the *abracadabra* of Spengler, Keyserling, and the Indian philosophers.

To American readers, far from European turmoil, Mr. Woolf's eloquence may seem a bit forced. His statements are sometimes too general for a critical taste. His vigorous language, however, is always stimulating and represents a noteworthy contribution to the field of broadside literature.

R. G.

Double Crostics: No. 81

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-one words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 16 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. Author of the Augsburg Confession.

II. Literary collection.

III. Bodily strength and vigor.

IV. One who commits larceny.

V. Goddess of Youth (Greek myth).

VI. Images.

VII. Ignis Fatuus.

VIII. Opposite of an egoist.

IX. English writer (1819-1900).

X. One who eats in small bits.

XI. Eastern hemisphere.

XII. Author of "Crowded Hours."

XIII. A breed of hunting dog.

XIV. Harm, damage.

XV. Domination by an idea.

XVI. Elastic; buoyant.

XVII. Clumsy.

XVIII. Religious reformer (1483-1546).

XIX. Inscribes.

XX. Famous palace of French Kings.

XXI. Fresh, vigorous.

WORDS

155 163 24 133 38 35 42 8 55 89 111

4 134 137 36 93 162 65 123 83

25 138 86 126 49

62 144 10 48 28

26 14 135 52

17 150 118 160 151 34 67 121

15 59 79 128 113 105 40 100 32 29 84 58

70 64 104 115 90 127 148 39

47 157 75 108 119 5

71 110 63 97 152 20 91

145 13 51 1 153 87 95 99

23 140 81 142 19 154 147 54 69

72 106 132 33 101 112 94 11 131

82 98 57 3 16 61 43 159

149 102 92 2 116 107 37 117 120

45 130 53 22 161 80 136 6 125

44 21 9 66 96 30 12

78 141 46 124 31 60

73 18 164 77 85 41 109

68 103 122 158 27 139 50 56 74

88 7 114 76 143 156 146 129

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Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD Q wishes to thank again the large number of friendly correspondents who sent in lists of their own private favorites as suggested Treasure Books for the lady in La Jolla. Letters are still coming in: the latest is from a reader in Shanghai. If the lady in La Jolla will kindly send us her address, which we have mislaid, we will forward these lists to her, too numerous to print. ☞The publication committee of the Rowfant Club (3028 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, Ohio) announces *An Austin Dobson Letter Book.* Alban Dobson, son of the poet and critic, has selected from letters to his distinguished father passages interesting to bibliophiles and has added intimate comment. ☞The price of this book will be below $10; exact figure depending on subscriptions received. Ready in time for Christmas. ☞The sprightly Lucius Beebe has written *Boston and the Boston Legend* (Appleton-Century, $5) particularly to show the Sacred City as rather more genial than tradition allows. He says Boston has supplied "some of the most gorgeous rioting, most learned cursing, hardest drinking and most spectacular high-binding finance."

☞The learned bluestockings Carolyn Wells and Louella D. Everett sent their publishers (Little, Brown & Co.) to the dictionary when they wrote that their new anthology was for ailurophiles. It is a gay collection called *The Cat in Verse;* in their brief and agreeable note of explanation they restrain themselves from turning a Foreword into an Essay. They do not deal with The Cat in folklore, occultism or Deep Brooding. The cat's charms," they remark, "are only inscrutability and fur." ☞Mark Harris, of Dingwall-Rock, publishers, says the mystery omnibus *Murder by the Dozen* is his first effort as "a newcomer to the strange and terrible business of publishing books for the trade." His office is at 45 West 45 and he says that he shares with Old Q "the stately vista of the Harvard Club's famous smoke-stack." ☞The bright eye of Donald Gordon compiling the American News Company's monthly book bulletin notes that the title of a new publisher's catalogue sounds unfortunate. It says simply: DODGE BOOKS.

☞Harry Patterson (in Grand Island, Nebraska) writes me that he still rereads John Bennett's *Master Skylark;* and that Conrad Aiken's *Blue Voyage* is "a whale of a good novel." ☞I am still on intermittent vacation. I came back to town, saw in Brentano's window a book called *How To Have Fun With Your Clothes On.* I thought this vulgar and went back to the country. ☞I shall not return home until that motor truck with loudspeakers on it and a crew of dewlapped salesmen quits trying to sell me pamphlets on Bible and Government by Judge Rutherford. Who *is* Judge Rutherford and why does he wear a Pecksniff collar? ☞Tell the Mermaids, if they positively can't find a bottle of Old Parr, *Cutty Sark* will do; the whisky named for a ship named for Burns's bobtailed shift. One of the former customers listed on the Cutty Sark label was Lizzie Farren the actress. She came to London in 1777 and played Kate Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer.* ☞I don't know how far she stooped: but she nearly conquered Charles James Fox; until he saw her play a "breeches part" and observed that her figure was not good. Horace Walpole thought her the best actress he had ever seen. ☞Ask the Mermaids to go round to the N. Y. office of the *Manchester Guardian* (220 West 42) and get me half a dozen late issues of the M. G. Weekly, the newspaper that tells me the kind of news my foreshortened view of the world requires; from it, for instance, I learned lately the grievous fact that Britain has at last adopted Western Union's horrid notion of "Greetings Telegrams." The British Greeter pays thrippence extra, for which he gets "a special form bordered with red and gold, which includes doves with letters in their beaks and an octave of music representing a peal of bells."

☞I liked Professor Osgood's remark (in his fine textbook of literature *The Voice of England,* Harper's) that James Thomson was "great enough to be a poet's poet." ☞If you find out what poetry the poets are reading, what cars the engineers are driving, what scissors the barbers are using, there's some chance of Going to Town. ☞Who cares what kind of cigarettes Mrs. Frelinghuysen Fish sets her mattress on fire with—except the color printer? ☞My favorite song is *I Took My Harp To a Party But Nobody Asked Her To Stay.* ☞My favorite grace is Tom Fairbanks's, *Benedictine Benedecanter.* ☞My next campfire will be on that hilltop near Walt Whitman's birthplace: the highest point on L. I.

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By Edward H. O'Neill

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The Compleat Collector

RARE BOOKS: CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Fine Printing and is conducted by Carl Purington Rollins

Terra Incognita

THE ways of the acquisitor are strange. It was the fate of this segment of the Compleat Collector to pass a few days during the summer in the company of a no-more than-ordinarily rabid stamp collector, and a whole new terminology, an entirely alien technique of conquest, swam into our ken. We became aware, for a moment or two, of the distinction between blocks, panes, and sheets—the designation sheet, it appears, is as much misused by the non-stamp-collector as the designation uncut is misused by the non-book-collector. Each passion, moreover, exhibits an explicable tendency to make one syllable do the work of many—the book-collector says bib for bibliography, the stamp-collector perf for perforation.

The dissimilarities are, naturally, even more striking. The stamp-collector inclines far toward paranoia in the detail of condition—his perfs must be fairly centered, every hole must be punched through, the original gum must be present. He carries tweezers with him, and falls into the habit of using them to pick up tiny objects generally.

The book-collector is often ridiculed for his slavish loyalty to the creed of the point. The awry ornament on page 84, the still unshattered comma on page 491 that make, if not all the difference in the world, at least so much difference as lies between seventy-five dollars and seven dollars and a half—these matters incite guffaws among the incognoscenti. But the stamp-collector must have not only an example of the unshattered comma, but examples of the shattering and of the ultimately shattered comma in all its stages, so that, at the last, if he could run his collection through a projection machine, one could actually see the business of deterioration in full process. How charming is divine philately.

Our friend showed us a specimen. "Here," he said, "is something that is definitely rare. Only an insignificant number of these were issued."

"Insignificant?" we inquired, envisioning a total issue of one hundred, or perhaps only fifty. "How many, actually?"

"Oh," he said, "probably around eight hundred thousand."

There, my masters, is a limited edition that is in very sooth a limited edition.

Diagnosis

An apparently inconsistent complaint has repeatedly been voiced by the rare-book trade during the past five years. It has assumed the form of a two-part threnody for departed customers and departed books. Can there exist, and if so why should there exist, at one and the same moment, a shortage alike of buyers and of merchandise?

The phenomenon is not so contradictory as it seems. During the most desperate of economic crises the collecting urge is not utterly silenced, nor are the means of gratifying it wholly dried up. Even from 1930 to 1935, be it remembered, more men and women continued to receive pay checks than were forced to forego them. The army of the employed was hardly so well equipped as it had been before, but it kept formation, and those among it who had contracted the collecting habit in happier days continued to respond to its appeal, albeit with reduced effect on bank clearings.

Such buying as there was, moreover, was of a saner, a more selective sort. The days when almost anything between covers could successfully masquerade as a collector's item slid over the horizon—and God willing, will stay slid. Collectors bought sparsely, but they bought shrewdly, and desirable books, particularly in fine condition, did not long remain on the bookseller's shelves even when the clouds of depression were lowest and blackest.

There must be taken into account, too, the fact that during the glamorous 1920's the country had been systematically explored for good books and even for fair books. This is not to say that no sequestered manse survives which may not shelter a noble run of New England Primers antedating any hitherto seen by man in this century, but be sure that it has already been marked out by some alert eye as a likely quarry. Scouting developed into a systematized, even into an overcrowded profession, and the zeal for the uncovering of rarities became almost a door-to-door pursuit. The collecting passion was enormously publicized; Vincent Starrett contributed to the *Saturday Evening Post* an article headed "Have You a Tamerlane in Your Attic?" and a Worcester housewife looked there and found one—it is now the property of Owen D. Young.

Thus the merchandise moved in the heydays—from the cowhide trunk to solander case, out of casual and unpremeditated hiding into purposeful and intelligent hoarding. And whither it went, there it rested. Such of it as was not absorbed in quantity before 1930 has been as adequately if not so abundantly absorbed since. At whatever pace, the rare-book traffic has moved along a one-way street. Eventually all the good books will have gone down it.

All this means, of course, that the source of supply in the future will be, mainly, collectors themselves. The speculative fringe will continue to go to market, buying or selling as the occasion seems to warrant. But the non-speculative collector will part with his treasures only with his eventual dissolution or when the dire compulsion of some harder time to end hard times forces his hand. What the effect of this situation will be on prices is an exciting question. The trend will inevitably be upward, whether immediately or not, but no prophet dare foretell what groups of books will be most affected, or what least, or to what extent. It is safe to say, however, that the next few seasons, in auction room and bookshop alike, will present a lively, informing, and entertaining panorama of the collecting universe.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE HOUSE OF WRAITH *Edward T. Millard* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.)	Cultured British blackmailer slain. Amateur 'tecs—one a suspect—and Insp. Rapp contest every clue.	Murder, robbery, ancient house, puzzling picture-diary, love interest—this has everything.	Top-notcher
THE SCANDAL OF FATHER BROWN *G. K. Chesterton* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Eight adventures of the umbrelliferous *padré*, all but two involving uncanny murders.	Featherweights, a few of them, but all in all as satisfying a collection as one could wish.	For adepts
MISS MYSTERY *Sydney Horler* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Lovely lady secret agent and susceptible Yankee diplomat track wicked Russian plotter.	Some of Mr. Horler's Americanisms are a trifle askew but his thrills are 100 proof.	Bld.-and-Thun.
DEATH AT DAYTON'S FOLLY *Virginia Rath* (Crime Club: $2.)	There was poison in the brandy and the lumber-king expired. Then Rocky, the depitty, and Mr. Pope got busy.	Snowbound Cal. mountain locale is attractive, family warfare interesting, and sleuthing holds up pretty well.	Adequate
MURDER IN TEXAS *Ada E. Lingo* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.)	Newspaper owner shot as his oil-well gushes: town banker goes next. Girl reporter and private 'tec solve it.	Malodorous mazes of small-town scandal form pungent background for quick-moving, plausible yarn.	It'll do
THE PERJURED ALIBI *W. S. Masterman* (Dutton: $2.)	Brewer-baronet slain on eve of wedding. Friend saves suspect and spots real killer.	Bit prosy at times, but enlivened by a very dirty villain and some creepy graveyard stuff.	Passable

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One More Spring

BY ROBERT NATHAN

THE OVERBROOK PRESS announces early publication of an illustrated edition of Robert Nathan's classic of the depression.

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